

Tajikistan Conflict Assessment:
Substantive Findings of the May 12-15, 2008
Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) Application Workshop
May 30, 2008

Disclaimer: This report has not been cleared by any of the agencies involved in the Interagency Conflict Assessment Team, nor by individuals who participated in the team. The report was written by Susan Allen Nan, an outside observer of the deliberations of the team, with assistance from David Hunsicker, a USAID member of the team. The authors accept full responsibility for any errors in their attempts to convey the views of the assessment team. As this report contains a summary of the team's discussions, facts cited here have not necessarily been checked against other sources, but reflect the informed assertions of country experts within the Team.

Executive summary

Tajikistan is a strategically located country with many potentially explosive dynamics simmering close to boiling point. The authoritarian regime keeps a tight lid on potentially threatening unrest, thus limiting non-state violence in the short term. An interagency team (the Team) of Tajikistan experts utilized the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) to analyze the Tajik context, core grievances, social and institutional resilience, key actors, drivers of conflict, mitigating factors, and moments for increasing or decreasing the potential for violent conflict. Of particular concern is the potential for a humanitarian crisis in Fall 2008 or winter 2008-2009, when people are expected to be cold and hungry with little if any reserves remaining after last year's harsh winter emergency. A crisis, coupled with the growing readiness of Tajiks to blame the President for their unmet needs, could spark violent conflict. The report outlines relevant short, medium, and long-term opportunities for U.S. engagement to encourage and support effective governance by the ruling party to meet the needs of the people of Tajikistan and prevent violent conflict. The Team concluded that the potential for violent conflict in Tajikistan is significant, and that humanitarian and strategic concerns demand concerted U.S. efforts to prevent state failure.

Introduction

Tajikistan has long been plagued by many hardships, the product of a difficult geography, limited natural resources and a weak economic infrastructure. These make life difficult for most Tajiks, and create the conditions for potentially destabilizing violence. These problems have been particularly acute over the last year. With the U.S. currently committed to military operations in Afghanistan, the potential for destabilizing violence in Tajikistan just north of Afghanistan merits careful consideration of appropriate conflict prevention and mitigation measures.

Tajiks in May 2008 live in the midst of a “perfect storm” of daily hardships and potentially destabilizing factors. The coming together this year of several hardships has led some Tajiks to lament the current state of their country in conversations with foreigners. Many Tajiks cannot buy enough food and have depleted any food reserves. Most lacked sufficient electricity to keep warm in the harsh winter of 07-08, and expect more of the same this coming winter. The country is virtually bankrupt, crippled by debt and high inflation. Business is stifled by a culture of corruption. Remittances from Tajiks working abroad, mostly in Russia, make up a high proportion of Tajikistan’s GDP. The civil war of the 1990s is fresh in the national consciousness of the half of the Tajik population that is over age 25, discouraging a return to civil war, although blatant violations of the 1997 Peace Accord remain unaddressed. Extremist groups, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, have also been carrying activities in Tajikistan in recent years aimed at establishing an Islamic Caliphate throughout the region. One billion dollars of drugs are estimated to cross through Tajikistan yearly, feeding a criminal economy that parallels the country’s struggling cotton and aluminum businesses. Finally, this year locusts are attacking crops in stronger numbers, while a glacier threatens to first block a mountain stream and then release a flood as it melts. In a country where 60% of the adults suffer from worms and outbreaks of typhoid are regularly found in Soghd and Kulyob, the discourse of plagues is fed by real hardships.

Looking beyond a listing of troubles, the analysis here tells the story of a strategically located country with many potentially explosive dynamics simmering close to boiling point. The authoritarian regime keeps a tight lid on potentially threatening unrest, thus limiting non-state violence in the short term. Although President Rahmon and his advisors may (mistakenly) fear U.S. intentions of orchestrating a “color revolution” (such as the Rose Revolution in Georgia, the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, or the Tulip Revolution in neighboring Kyrgyzstan), this report suggests more appropriate short, medium, and long-term opportunities for U.S. engagement to encourage effective governance by the ruling party to meet the needs of the people of Tajikistan.

This report presents the findings of the May 12-15, 2008 U.S. Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF) Application Workshop deliberations. At this four-day workshop, 13 representatives of multiple USG agencies formed the Interagency Conflict Assessment Team (the Team), which brought their knowledge together to develop a shared analytical conflict assessment of Tajikistan today, supported by a workshop

director, workshop facilitator, and control team. All discussions were unclassified. Guided by the principles of the ICAF, the team considered the context, core grievances, institutional resilience, key actors, drivers of conflict, mitigating factors, moments for increasing conflict, moments for decreasing conflict, and recommendations based on an analysis of current efforts and gaps in Tajikistan. Below, after a brief note on areas for further information gathering, each of these aspects of the conflict assessment is considered separately.

Before proceeding with the Team's substantive conclusions, it is important to note that the Team arrived at these conclusions on the basis of incomplete information. In the course of deliberations, the Team identified two core types of knowledge that would have helped make the analysis more focused and the recommendations more specific:

- What is the extent of food insecurity in Tajikistan today? The Team sees the need for a countrywide food market study taking into consideration both local production and imports. The World Food Program's report on Food Security that is expected to be released in June could provide some of this information but was not available to the Team. It could however help inform planners using this ICAF report.
- Who are emergent local leaders? The Team recommends identifying key networks and nodes within Tajik society, specifically mapping individuals and groups who may emerge with authority in the future. In a society so closely controlled by President Rahmon, potential future leaders may survive by keeping a low profile. Nevertheless, it would be useful to our analysis and planning of future activities to identify these individuals and cultivate relationships with them, although an authoritarian environment makes it exceedingly difficult to do so.

The Team considered holding classified discussions to augment their analysis. However, those with most access to classified sources felt such discussion would not change the overall conclusions, but only offer additional supporting details to the analysis. The Team wished to retain the unclassified status of their deliberations in order to facilitate the widest possible usage of their analysis.

Context

As described above, the Team identified many long-standing conditions that create pre-conditions for violent conflict in Tajikistan. These plagues -- of poverty, corruption, drug trafficking, large migrant population working in Russia, food insecurity, a brutally cold winter with little electricity, struggling economy focused on aluminum production forced cotton farming, recent civil war, proximity to radical Islamic groups, and even typhoid, worms, locusts, and a glacier—do not in themselves cause violent conflict. Neither do the clan-based divisions, north-south divide, or Sunni-Shia (Isma'ili) differences. But, these factors form the context within which violent conflict might develop, and thus informed the Team conflict assessment.

Core grievances

The Team considered a long list of grievances in Tajikistan. These grievances are perceptions by groups in Tajikistan that their needs for physical or livelihood security, interests, or values, are threatened by one or more other groups and/or social institutions. For example, farmers are angry that they have to plant cotton rather than food crops, lacking appropriate credit and lacking appropriate irrigation, risking their own material survival, with the only apparent good being the enrichment of the cotton elites. Many families are angry to see their adult men leave to work in Russia, ripping their families apart, challenging their traditional patriarchal values. Others have become enraged when the generally accepted rampant corruption crossed a line of acceptability, as evidenced by a protest in Khorugh over the abuse of power by local law enforcement and by outrage in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO) when officials in Dushanbe started selling off land belonging to GBAO. After considering these many complaints, two grievances stood out as most salient: lack of basic governmental services, and disenfranchised youth questioning Presidential authority and vision.

Various segments of society are increasingly dissatisfied with the regime's inability and/or unwillingness to provide basic services (e.g. food and energy, jobs, education). While in previous years people may have noticed the lack of services, in the past several months people have increasingly begun blaming the President for their unmet needs. Even in a society in which informants are numerous and efficient and retribution is swift, Tajiks have recently begun speaking out, both in large meetings and in the media, to blame the President for the ongoing threats to their basic survival-- food, warm shelter, medical care, education, and jobs. Thus, while the level of services provided by the government has long been less than satisfactory, the Team identified a recent shift within the population to blaming the President for these threats to their livelihoods.

The second core grievance that seemed most salient the feeling of disenfranchisement of youth, who are frustrated by the lack of opportunities to build their futures. There is a large youth bulge in Tajikistan, due to an average birth rate of 5.5 children per family. Those under 20 years of age or so do not have clear memories of the civil war. They are less inclined to agree with the President's admonition not to discuss difficult topics because of the danger of return to civil war. They question President Rahmon's recurrent blaming of the civil war for all Tajikistan's many problems. The youth have stopped going along with blaming the civil war, and started blaming the President. These young people see a corrupt system built around reinforcing elite power and wealth, and leaving them out of a chance to build a life beyond the quest for day-to-day survival.

Social and institutional resilience

What is holding Tajikistan together, with all these contextual factors feeding many Tajiks' perceptions of threats to their basic human needs? Tajikistan is also full of the perception, by various groups in society, that social relationships, structures, or processes are in place and able to provide opportunities for resolving conflicts and meeting basic

needs through non-violent means. These perceptions form the social and institutional resilience that mitigates against the eruption of violent conflict in Tajikistan.

There are four main areas of social and institutional resilience the Team identified in Tajikistan:

- Migrant remittances
- Traditional support networks (e.g. extended families, rotating village loan system)
- Soviet legacies and resistance to change
- Ability to access some services through corruption.

Migrant remittances form a high proportion of the Tajik GDP. Many families rely on men working abroad to send home money to cover, or at least contribute to covering, basic survival needs.

While migrant remittances are not a secure source of resilience, as Russia could choose to cut off access to visas to migrant workers at any time, traditional support networks form a long-standing resilience in Tajikistan. Extended families care for one another. They share food, crowd together for warmth, and generally support each others' survival. Beyond the extended family, rotating village loan systems allow families in need (for funeral or wedding costs, for example) to draw on common resources. Communities may band together to pay one resident with a car to be on call to act as an emergency ambulance.

The post-Soviet legacy continues to influence Tajikistan today. Change is generally feared, as many changes have ended up for the worse. This resistance to change, like the President's frequent references to avoiding another civil war, mitigate against people rising up in hopes of an improved situation. And infrastructure and institutions remaining from the Soviet Union still serve as the backbone of the state's ability to provide at least basic social services to the populace.

Finally, while Tajikistan is notoriously corrupt, there is an ability to access some services through corruption. Paying the right fee to the right person can sometimes buy one a bed in a hospital with blankets, enough water through the irrigation canal to satisfy one's crops, etc. This may not work often, but it seems to work often enough that, perhaps through Skinnerian reinforcement, people continue to try. The times when the system works, and this willingness to keep trying, together mitigate against a resort to violence.

Key actors

There are numerous internal and external "key actors" who could mobilize people around core grievances or around social/institutional resilience and thereby instigate violent conflict or prevent violent conflict from erupting. Primary among these is the Presidential family and others from Khatlon province, particularly from the President's home district of Dangara. Politics in Tajikistan has long been based on patronage networks that often supersede formal bureaucratic structures in terms of their power and influence. Therefore the influence and control of government offices by those connected to the presidential

family means that little takes place in Tajikistan without involvement of this powerful elite. The ability of those in the elite to use the patronage network to their own advantages is a dynamic which supports the maintenance of the corrupt system. The President's unmatched ability to use force to suppress dissent may quell conflict in the short-term, but could pave the way for a larger conflict long-term.

Opposition leaders, some of whom had prominent roles in the civil war, and others who have largely risen to prominence since then, are also potential key actors. Muhiddin Kabiri is perhaps the most prominent of these. As the leader of the Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), he assumed the mantle of his late predecessor Abdullo Nuri who served as the head of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) during the civil war and therefore continues to play an important role. But others also remain players, including leaders of the Communist, Social Democratic and other opposition who could rally people around a cause.

Other countries in the region also play important roles in Tajikistan. Chief among these are Russia and China. Both are significant investors in Tajikistan's economy and sources of "no-strings-attached" aid delivered directly to the central government. The Chinese are busy building roads that will link the Tajik economy directly to its own. The importance of the continued flow of remittances from Russia for the Tajik economy cannot be overstated. But neighboring Uzbekistan with its unfriendly border policies and Iran, which shares strong linguistic and cultural ties, as well as business links to Tajikistan are also important actors that could act to mobilize or quell conflict in Tajikistan.

But the key actor that could turn out to be of the most consequence in the event of a conflict is the one that at present remains an unknown. This is what the Team came to refer to the "opportunistic leader." Given the difficulty in acquiring information in an authoritarian country like Tajikistan, the Team found it difficult to predict who this person could be, but likely prospects included other opposition figures formerly affiliated with the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), religious leaders (either traditional leaders or new ones, including those affiliated with extremist groups like HT and terrorist groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)), or even a charismatic farmer who is able to mobilize others around local issues. Other possibilities include someone from the diaspora community, particularly given the significance of the remittances from abroad for the Tajik economy.

Other key actors are already engaged in ways that help mitigate the potential for violent conflict, at least in the short-term. The security ministries (i.e. the Ministry of Security and Ministry of the Interior) are influential in maintaining the current status quo. The youth bulge mentioned above also certainly weighs heavily on the potential for conflict, as an opportunistic leader could mobilize the youth's discontent in the future, while currently the remittances they send home from Russia, Kazakhstan and elsewhere help the Tajik economy limp along and keep many families from struggling more than they are. Similarly, the aid provided by international organizations like the World Bank, IMF, ADB and the Aga Khan makes these organizations key actors that seek to support factors that mitigate against violent conflict.

Drivers of conflict

When key actors mobilize core grievances, that mobilized discontent becomes a driver of conflict that may lead to violent conflict. The Team considered a broad range of possibilities for how violent conflict might erupt in the near future in Tajikistan. These two most salient drivers of large-scale violent conflict are:

- Opportunistic leadership of mass mobilization, followed by government crackdown and popular protest; and
- Elite in-fighting factionalizing the security services and mobilizing popular support.

Given the lack of information available to the Team, each of these most likely scenarios for the eruption of violent conflict must be described in very general terms.

An opportunistic leader might mobilize a public, already showing increased willingness to protest, and call for major changes in policy, the provision of services, or even the regime. The official government response to the protest would likely be violent. A harsh but incomplete crackdown by the regime could set off violent retaliation by the mobilized masses with the continued leadership of an opportunistic leader. In the last year, there have been several small protests of twenty people or so, each of which has been quickly disbanded by government security forces. The Team felt it likely that a protest of larger magnitude would eventually erupt if grievances are not addressed.

Within the elites, there is potential for struggles to control the instruments of power, which could involve mobilizing larger scale violent struggles in support of one or the other side in a split between the elites. For example, the President's brother in law Hasan is reported to have been shot recently by another family member. Powerful drug money could influence a power struggle amongst the elites. So could regional power centers, such as Garm, where the national Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) forces were repelled by the Garm MVD in a shoot-out which left Ahmadov remaining in place as the head of the Garm MVD. Any variation of the above scenarios of an elite power struggle that factionalized the security services could lead to massive violent conflict. The Team also sees a strong possibility of violent conflict if the question of Presidential succession should suddenly become relevant. If President Rahmon were to flee, or die, or otherwise leave office without a clear plan in place for a successor, violent conflict might be sparked by the elite power struggles likely to ensue.

The President's continued consolidation of power and repression of opposition may in the short term mitigate against violent conflict. The regime keeps a lid on any non-state violence, as well as most non-violent dissent. However, the Team also sees President Rahmon's authoritarian policies in the long-term contributing to the context in which drivers of conflict may be mobilized, particularly since people lack other outlets to express their dissent. When the people see the President resisting all economic reforms that would impact his own personal wealth accumulation, and reach the limit of their own suffering of unmet needs, the authoritarian approach will no longer be sustainable. Similarly, when a set of powerful elites develop a sense that their share of the spoils of

leadership is unfairly shrinking due to the President's actions, those elites might revolt against the consolidation of power and repression of opposition.

Finally, the Team noted that each of the above scenarios—opportunistic leadership of massive protest, or elite infighting with mass mobilization—could be made more likely by a wide range of exogenous events. If drugs ceased to flow through the country, that would send a shock through the economy and the political elite, possibly sparking realignment of the power structures. If Russia were to cut off or significantly limit migrant worker visas, that, too, would send a shock through the economy and would instantly produce a large population of unemployed young men dissatisfied with their prospects for survival. A block by any neighboring country on the flows of gas and food into Tajikistan, as has happened in the past, could similarly upset the economy and its ability to provide basic subsistence to Tajiks. Instability in any of Tajikistan's neighboring countries could spill over the borders. Tajikistan's stability depends significantly on the stability and tolerance of its neighbors and also its supporters Russia, China, and Iran.

Mitigating factors

Key actors may mobilize the potential of social and institutional resilience to actively mitigate against the eruption of violent conflict. The Team assessed the authoritarian Presidential restrictions on religion, media, assembly, etc. as short term conflict mitigating factors. But, over the long-term authoritarian policies and practices contribute to the context in which more grievances become more pronounced and may thus make people more inclined to resort to violent conflict in the future.

Similarly, President Rahmon's fanning the flames of the older generation's fear of a return to civil war seems in the short term to reduce the threat of violence. People have been somewhat afraid to speak up about grievances, although that fear seems to be fading in the wake of the harsh winter of 07-08. While in the short-term, the fear of a civil war may keep some from mobilizing for change, in the long-term there is a danger of growing dissatisfaction and a lack of constructive forums for engaging on difficult issues. The current avoidance of conflict may be nurturing a cultural inability to engage constructively on contentious issues.

Other factors supporting the continued status quo, without resort to violent conflict to force change, are those forces which are meeting some peoples' needs some of the time, and thereby reducing the potential to mobilize those people. Those business elites and government officials who benefit from the corrupt patronage system seek to reinforce that network. Russian migrant visas help Tajik people afford food, while Russian media supportive of the regime and political and security influence reinforce the power and authority of the Rahmon regime. Foreign assistance and training has thus far averted a widespread humanitarian disaster. The Tajik government does provide some services. And, there is some room for opposition to support political engagement, providing the semblance of a way to engage nonviolently to address grievances.

One of the strongest conflict mitigating factors is mobilized daily by unknown leaders throughout Tajikistan. The Tajik tradition of strong extended families and community sharing of resources continues to mobilize to meet local needs, supporting survival in community in conditions in which individuals could not survive alone. The elder men leading these extended families and communities tend to quiet discontent, and pressure younger generations to respect authority and not mobilize for change. The Team expects these traditions will keep a lid on the eruption of protest only until a tipping point of intolerance for unmet needs is reached.

Moments for increasing or decreasing the potential for conflict

The team identified several upcoming moments that could be turning points for increasing or decreasing the potential for violent conflict. These are moments that might rapidly change the balance of power, the saliency of core grievances, the strength of conflict mitigating factors, or the political space in which key actors might mobilize drivers of conflict.

Two possible turning points that the Team identified are:

- Fall and winter 08-09, when people may again be cold and hungry, without the reserves which carried them through last year. The Team felt this was a turning point that will likely be conducive to key actors introducing drivers of conflict. Furthermore, the expected announcement of an audit of the Central Bank also in fall and winter 08-09 may exacerbate strains in the economy.
- Elections in 2010, if people come to expect the semblance of free and fair elections, and are disappointed, although the Team noted that this is less likely in Tajikistan than in other former Soviet republics where this has in fact taken place.

Other moments for increasing or decreasing the potential for violent conflict are based on hypothetical situations that could develop, and were not explored in depth by the Team. Another event worth noting is the summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Dushanbe in August 08, discussed below as an entry point for diplomatic initiatives, although some Team members were doubtful of the U.S. making any substantial impact through that forum.

Options for engaging to prevent widespread violent conflict

The Team compared current efforts to those actions that might affect the potential drivers of conflict and mitigating factors, and determined that additional concerted external assistance is imperative for addressing the potential for violent conflict in Tajikistan. The Team considered what actions might be appropriate for the USG in the short, medium, and long-term. Some of the medium-term engagement is contingent on whether or not a crisis is averted in food and energy supplies and the banking system in winter 08-09.

Short-term options

In the short-term, through winter 08-09, the Team suggests five options for engaging to prevent an immediate crisis.

- *Emergency funding to address humanitarian concerns.* The Team felt this would be most effective if begun as soon as possible. It may be too late to distribute seed and fertilizer for this growing cycle. More realistic measures would include cash transfers, cash for work, and keeping the Food for Peace program and its implementers' operations in place. The Team was distraught that Food for Peace is about to end, and Mercy Corps and Save the Children will be greatly reducing their operations there at the same time that CARE headquarters has made a decision to close its operations in Tajikistan. In a matter of months, there may be a widespread food crisis, and no widely trusted network in place for food or cash distribution. (The World Food Program is scheduled to close in June 2009, unless it receives significant funding, but there are some concerns around possible corruption in areas of its distribution network.)
- *Diplomatic engagement.* Diplomatic engagement could take two forms.
 - Senior U.S. diplomats and military officers could meet with President Rahmon to deliver the message that the US is concerned about the potential for a food and energy crisis, holds him personally responsible for the well-being of the Tajik people, and seeks ways to work together immediately in the short-term to alleviate the strong potential for people to be very cold and hungry this winter. Reinforce also that the GOT's own Freedom to Farm program is important, as forced cotton growing is not allowing farmers a real livelihood.
 - The U.S. could demarche SCO member countries in preparation for the SCO summit in Dushanbe in August 2008. The U.S. could outline for the SCO member countries the dangers of state failure in Tajikistan due to the looming food and energy crisis, and ask these countries to deliver the same message to President Rahmon as outlined above.
- *Management of public perceptions.* President Rahmon could be encouraged to more effectively communicate with the Tajik people the measures he is taking (in cooperation with his friends in the international community) to meet their needs this coming winter and USG public diplomacy expertise could provide some technical assistance to these efforts.
- *Identification of networks and nodes of leadership in Tajik society.* Concerted efforts to gather additional intelligence on key local leaders, business networks, leaders of farmers, responsible religious leaders, etc. would pave the way for more effective engagement in the event of a crisis. Alumni of U.S. exchange programs could be retained as contacts through alumni activities or follow-on training programs. Implementing partners could be asked to identify emerging leaders they encounter in their work in the field.
- *Strengthening the training infrastructure.* Ongoing training of border guards, military, and law enforcement personnel could be strengthened to enhance training in emergency response to medical situations, earthquakes, mud slides, etc., with a particular eye towards preparing for another possibly harsh winter again this year.

Mid-term options

In the mid-term, from Spring 09 through the parliamentary elections in 2010, the Team sees options for continuing initiatives listed under the short-term options, as well as new initiatives. Continuing efforts through high-level diplomatic engagement to influence the President and his circle could be directed towards encouraging structural reforms to prevent future possible crises, while maintaining the message that the President remains responsible for the welfare of the Tajik people in the short-term as well. An increased foreign assistance budget for Tajikistan could allow more robust conflict prevention and mitigation including preventing a humanitarian crisis. And, in preparation for the 2010 elections, the U.S. could coordinate with partners such as the OSCE to support free and fair elections, or at least to demonstrate to opposition groups that some outsiders see the fraud which may color the elections.

If an emergency is declared by the Ambassador, other options may also be appropriate. These include providing seed and fertilizer for crops, non-food humanitarian assistance such as stoves, coals, and blankets and utilizing a CENTCOM airlift. Working with local networks and nodes identified during the short-term stage and coordinating multilaterally would increase the impact of emergency response.

If an emergency is somehow averted, there will be opportunities to build more social and institutional resilience in hopes of preventing future emergencies. Options to consider include:

- Reinforcing the security services with training for community policing, peacekeeping operations, demining, border guard functions, and specialized response units.
- Supporting local governments on land use issues, legal aid center, public service announcements, agricultural reform, bar associations, etc.
- Conducting energy feasibility studies.
- Encourage economic reform, supporting and reinforcing findings from the audit of the central bank to be completed in late 2008.
- Continue efforts at managing public perceptions.

Long-term options

After the 2010 parliamentary elections, options will largely be to build on the mid-term efforts outlined above, and focus on building community and government structures that reinforce social and institutional resilience in Tajikistan.

Potential consequences of failure to act

The team assessed the potential consequences of a failure to act as grave. Without outside support aimed at averting a humanitarian crisis, there may be violent civil unrest in Fall 2008 or Winter 08-09. President Rahmon would likely respond to such unrest with force. Escalating protest responding to the government crackdown could result in state failure. State failure would exacerbate a humanitarian crisis, increase regional instability, create a safe haven for criminal and extremist elements, and potentially constrain other U.S. access in the region.

Appendix 1: Participants

This report attempts to summarize the conclusions of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Team (ICAT) that met May 12-15, 2008. The following members of the ICAT were not all in attendance consistently at each session, and thus may not have agreed with some of the conclusions expressed in this report. In addition, please note that the ICAT has not reviewed this report for accuracy.

ICAT Members

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This interagency conflict assessment was conducted both to benefit our interagency understanding of Tajikistan, and also to pilot test ways of applying the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF). The application workshop was led by: workshop director Tjip Walker, USAID/CMM
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Dave Diaz, DOD/OSD
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Appendix 2: Resource Document

Examining Contextual Factors that Shape the Prospects for Conflict or Instability in Tajikistan: Measurement with Quantitative Indicators

May 9, 2008

Prepared by ARD, Inc. and the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland

This memorandum provides an overview of contextual factors—as understood in terms of the Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework (ICAF)—that shape the prospects for conflict in Tajikistan. The memorandum is organized into two sections. The first section provides an explanation for how several major quantitative indices arrived at assessments regarding the risks of conflict and instability in Tajikistan. In particular, the discussion will highlight how the various indices relate to the specific contextual factors highlighted in the ICAF. The second section presents a table that lists 37 quantitative indicators that measure different dimensions of the contextual features. As the ICAF makes clear, the prospects for conflict in a given country are shaped by a context defined by the character of the economy, political institutions, ethnic and religious groups, the security context, and many other factors. The listing of quantitative indicators is meant as a tool for aiding the process of assessing key elements of the contextual backdrop in Tajikistan.

Tajikistan's Risk of Conflict or Political Instability: Comparing Indices and Connections to the ICAF

The purpose of this brief is to review how several indices rate Tajikistan's level of state weakness and risk for political instability. Further, the factors identified by these indices as contributing to Tajikistan's level of risk will be mapped onto the ICAF, with particular focus on identity groups and social and institutional resilience.¹ The indices consulted include USAID's 2008 Alert List on state fragility, the Fund for Peace's Failed State Index, the Brookings Institution's Index of State Weakness in the Developing World, and the University of Maryland's Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger.² Before delving into the details of factors contributing to risks of political instability, a brief overview of Tajikistan is in order. Then, the risk factors indicated by the above indices will be reviewed, with a focus on factors that are common to multiple indices. Finally,

¹ "Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework: A Status Report."

² USAID Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation. 2008. *2008 Alert Lists*. United States Agency for International Development.; Fund for Peace. 2007. "Failed States Index Scores 2007." http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=229&Itemid=366, accessed May 5, 2008; Susan E. Rice and Stewart Patrick. 2008. *Index of State Weakness in the Developing World*. Brookings Institution; J. Joseph Hewitt. 2008. "The Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger: Ranking States on Future Risks." In J. Joseph Hewitt, Jonathan Wilkenfeld and Ted Robert Gurr (eds) *Peace and Conflict 2008*. Center for International Development and Conflict Management. For an overview of these and additional assessment instruments, see Frederick Baron and Karina von Hippel. 2008. "Early Warning? A Review of Conflict Prediction Models and Systems." Center for Strategic and International Studies.

those factors will be mapped onto ICAF and contextualized in terms of how they play out in Tajikistan.

A Brief History of Tajikistan

Tajikistan is a former Soviet Republic, carved out of Uzbekistan in 1929. It occupies territory formerly held by the Emirate of Bukhara, but excludes that emirate's key cultural centers of Samarkhand and Bokhara (both of which remain part of Uzbekistan and still have large Tajik populations).³ The regions of Tajikistan are, due to topographical characteristics, relatively isolated from each other. Limited cross-regional interaction has led to the emergence of strong regional identities. Tajikistan was propelled into independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, although Tajik nationalist movements were virtually non-existent prior to this time. Intra-Tajik competition, primarily along the lines of regional factionalism, escalated into a civil war from 1992, with violence peaking in 1993-1994. On one side of the conflict was the Popular Front of Tajikistan (PFT), based on Kulob regional identity and with a neo-communist ideology; the opposing group, the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), was based on Gharm and Pamir regionalism and had an amalgam of democratic and Islamist ideologies. Although violence largely subsided by 1994, the war dragged on until 1997, when a U.N.-sponsored peace agreement was brokered.⁴ Elections were held in 1999. No major outbreaks of violence have occurred since the end of the civil war. However, many of the conditions that led to conflict remain in play.

Assessing State Weakness

Though each of the assessment methodologies mentioned previously use different methodologies and somewhat different indicators to measure state weakness and predict political instability, commonalities quickly become apparent in assessments of Tajikistan, which all the lists place in the moderate or moderate-high risk category. Lists compiled by USAID, the Fund for Peace and Brookings each pinpoint challenges for Tajikistan in the areas of corruption, rule of law and political factionalization. Additionally, all the methodologies highlight economic problems as leading to political instability in Tajikistan. Other factors that are included by at least one of the assessment methodologies are lack of political and civil liberties, widespread violations of human rights, and political instability in neighboring countries.

How Tajikistan Ranks

USAID Alert List:
46 out of 163

Fund for Peace Failed States:
39 out of 177

Brookings State Weakness:
42 out of 141

Peace & Conflict Ledger
40 out of 160

³ Payam Forough. 2002. "Tajikistan: Nationalism, Ethnicity, Conflict, and Socio-economic Disparities -- Sources and Solutions." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*. 22:1, 39-61. 40-41.

⁴ International Crisis Group. 24 December 2001. "Tajikistan: An Uncertain Peace." *ICG Asia Report*. 30. Osh/Brussels. http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/report_archive/A400521_24122001.pdf, accessed May 8, 2008.

Mapping onto Interagency Conflict Assessment Framework

The first phase outlined in the ICAF methodology is the identification of identity groups. Tajikistan, as mentioned previously, is dominated by regional identities that are largely intra-Tajik in definition. Traditionally, elites have hailed from the Sughd Province (previously Leninabad), although members from this regional identity were largely bystanders in the 1992-1997 civil war. The Kulobi identity (centered on the cities of Kulob and Qurghonteppa in Khatlon Province) has emerged as the dominant political force in the post-Soviet era and individuals from this region dominate the PFT. The primary rivals to Kulobis are Gharimis, whose region borders Khatlon Province. Pamiris (whom claim a distinct ethnic identity but whom most Tajiks see as a Tajik subgroup) also have a regional identity based in Badakshan.⁵ These regional identities form the basis of elite factionalization in Tajikistan. Other identities (in particular, ethnic, ideological and Islamist) do come into play, at times, but tend to be superimposed onto the regional identities.

Indices of state weakness and political instability translate most easily into the ICAF methodology in the areas of institutional performance and societal patterns. Each of the indices flags political and economic performance as leading factors of potential instability in Tajikistan. Tajikistan emerged from the Soviet Union as the poorest of the new countries; the civil war only served to exacerbate economic conditions.⁶ USAID's Alert List indicates a low quality of public services. Brookings' State Weakness index points to low GNI/capita one risk factor that drives its assessment of Tajikistan. Similarly, the Peace and Conflict Ledger highlights the high infant mortality rate as an indicator that Tajikistan's government is unable to deliver basic goods and services to its people.

While the economic condition of Tajikistan is somewhat dire, most of the indices flag poor political performance as the most problematic area. The Fund for Peace focuses on the criminalization and delegitimization of the state while Brookings includes high levels of corruption and lack of governmental accountability. In the context of Tajikistan, these dynamics are exemplified by the power of warlords (who are, again, largely representative of regional identities) in local and national politics.⁷ The control by warlords and criminal elements (including from within the state apparatus) of a burgeoning drug industry (focused on primarily the trafficking of Afghan opium and heroin) also contributes to state criminalization and high levels of corruption.⁸

Finally, the Peace and Conflict Ledger points to one factor external to Tajikistan that cannot be overlooked in terms of contextual factors underlying Tajikistan's risk for political stability: conflict in neighboring states. Tajikistan shares a 1344-kilometer

⁵ Kirill Nourzhanov. June 2005. "Saviours of the nation or robber barons? Warlord politics in Tajikistan." *Central Asian Survey*. 24:2. 109-130.

⁶ Forough. *op. cit.* 40.

⁷ Nourzhanov. *op. cit.*; International Crisis Group. 19 May 2004. "Tajikistan's Politics: Confrontation or Consolidation?" *ICG Asia Briefing*. Dushanbe/Brussels.

⁸ Letizia Paoli, Irina Rabkov, Victoria A. Greenfield, Peter Reuter. 2007. "Tajikistan: The Rise of a Narco-State." *Journal of Drug Issues*. 37: 951-979.

border with Afghanistan, where continued instability has both direct and indirect effects on Tajikistan. Both ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks have kin across this border, and refugee flows have gone in both directions in recent years. Furthermore, the porosity of this border contributes to the continuation and growth of the drug trade.

The summarized indices of state weakness and political instability are best at identifying factors that make up the first step of ICAF. However, when moving onto steps 2 and 3, to a large degree, more country-specific expertise and increasingly qualitative and narrative information should probably take the leading role.

Quantitative Indicators for Examining the Contextual Backdrop in Tajikistan

The table on the following pages lists 37 quantitative indicators that measure different elements of the contextual backdrop in Tajikistan. The table includes a brief descriptive label for the indicator as well as a reference (typically, a URL) for interested readers to consult for more information. When the indicator's value is not self-explanatory, a brief note is included. In most cases, the most recent year for which data were available was 2006.

Presenting only Tajikistan's values for the indicators would make interpretation difficult. Accordingly, Moldova was selected to serve as a basis for comparison. Like Tajikistan, Moldova recently gained independence when the Soviet Union dissolved. Moldova, however, is widely perceived to face less acute risks of instability or conflict. Accordingly, comparisons across the two countries may prove useful for yielding insights about what contextual differences reveal meaningful distinctions between the two states. Note, on occasion, the most recent year of available data was different for Tajikistan and Moldova.

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Economic Context						
GDP, 3-year change, 2004-2006 (constant 2000 US dollars)	World Development Indicators		14.2%	2006	11.8%	2006
GDP per capita, PPP (constant 2005 international \$)	World Development Indicators		\$1,560	2006	\$2,303	2006
Change in Foreign Direct Investment, 3-year change	World Development Indicators	The percentage is based on the WDI indicator "Foreign Direct Investment, net inflows (BoP, current US\$). The percentage reflects the change in the 2006 value compared to the 2004 value.	24%	2006	176%	2006
GINI Index	World Development Indicators	A GINI index of 0 represents perfect economic equality; a value of 100 represents perfect inequality	33.6	2004	33.2	2003

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Primary Commodity Exports (as % of total merchandise exports)	World Development Indicators	The percentage was calculated by obtaining the percentage of merchandise exports accounted for by the sum of exports of agricultural raw materials, ores and metals, and fuel. For Tajikistan, this breakdown was last available from the WDI in 2000. The comparable value was used for Moldova.	83%	2000	4%	2000
Number of Days to Start a Business	World Development Indicators		49	2007	23	2007
Ratio of Total Trade (imports plus exports) to GDP	World Development Indicators	The ratio takes the total value of exports and imports (current US\$) to GDP (current US\$)	0.81	2006	1.39	2006
Population Context						
Size of Displaced Population (Raw Total)	United States Committee for Refugees, <i>World Refugee Survey</i> (Compiled Electronically by Marshall, M.G. and available at http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm)		0	2006	0	2006
Urban Population (% of total)	World Development Indicators		25%	2006	47%	2006
Security Context						
Military Expenditure (as % of GDP)	World Development Indicators		2.2%	2004	0.3%	2006

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Military Personnel (as % of total population)	World Development Indicators		0.3%	2006	0.2%	2006
Regional/External Context						
Neighborhood Conflict (number of active conflicts in bordering states)	Uppsala Conflict Data Program http://www.pcr.uu.se/research/UCDP/	An active conflict is any conflict (intrastate or interstate) in which 25 or more fatalities were recorded in 2006, the last year for which data are available). Tajikistan borders 4 states; Moldova borders 2 states.	1	2006	0	2006
Neighborhood Democracy (number of neighboring states that qualify as cohesive democracies according to the Polity Project)	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	A cohesive democracy is any state that receives at least a +6 on the Polity Score (see Political Institution Characteristics below). Tajikistan borders 4 states; Moldova borders 2 states.	0	2006	2	2006
Identity Groups – Religious/Ethnic						
Ethnic fractionalization	From Fearon and Laitin (American Political Science Review, 2003)	The measure, adapted from the Soviet Atlas, gives the probability that any two randomly chosen people from the population would be from different ethnic groups.	0.55	2000	0.55	2000

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Political discrimination against ethnic or religious groups	Minorities at Risk Project http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar	From MAR variable POLDIS: 0=No discrimination, 1=Neglect/Remedial policies, 2=Neglect/No remedial policies, 3=Social exclusion/Neutral policy, 4=Exclusion/Repressive policy (Tajikistan's coding is based only on the Uzbeks. There was no coded discrimination for treatment of the other group, the Russians. Moldova's coding is based only on the Gagauz.)	3	2003	1	2003

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Economic discrimination against ethnic or religious groups	Minorities at Risk Project http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar	From MAR variable ECDIS: 0=No discrimination, 1=Historical neglect/Remedial policies, 2=Historical neglect/No remedial policies, 3=Social exclusion/Neutral policies, 4=Restrictive policies (Tajikistan's coding is based only on the Uzbeks. There was no coded discrimination for treatment of the other group, the Russians. Neither of the two groups in Moldova, the Slavs or the Gagauz, were coded for any economic discrimination.)	3	2003	0	2003
Identity Groups – Youth						
Population (ages 0-14, % total)	World Development Indicators		39%	2006	19%	2006
Literacy Rate, Youth Total (% of people ages 15-24)	World Development Indicators		99%	2000	99%	2004
Employment to Population Ratio, ages 15-24, total (%)	World Development Indicators		28%	2006	36%	2006
Societal Patterns						
Infant Mortality Rate (infant deaths per 1000 births)	World Development Indicators		56	2006	16	2006

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Male/Female Life Expectancy Ratio	World Development Indicators		64/69	2006	65/72	2006
Political Institution Characteristics						
Institutionalized Autocracy	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	A measure of the institutionalized autocracy in the authority characteristics of the government. A 0 reflects no autocratic features, a 10 reflects strong autocratic features.	4	2006	0	2006
Institutionalized Democracy	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	A measure of the institutionalized democracy in the authority characteristics of the government. A 0 reflects no democratic features, a 10 reflects strong democratic features.	1	2006	8	2006
Polity Score	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	The difference between the Polity institutionalized democracy score and the institutionalized autocracy score provides an overall assessment of a regime's authority characteristics on a unified scale. A 10 reflects perfect democracy, a -10 reflects perfect autocracy, and values close to 0 reflect mixed regime types.	-3	2006	8	2006

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Political Institutional Performance						
Competitiveness of Political Participation	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	From Polity variable PARCOMP: 1=repressed, 2=suppressed, 3=factional, 4=transitional, 5=competitive	3	2006	3	2006
Control of Corruption (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (low control) to +2.5 (high control)	-0.91	2006	-0.65	2006
Coup d'Etat (number in last five years, 2002-2006)	Center for Systemic Peace http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm		0	2006	1	2006
Government Effectiveness (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (low effectiveness) to +2.5 (high effectiveness)	-1.06	2006	-0.85	2006
Government Revenues as % of GDP	World Development Indicators, World Bank		13%	2004	34%	2006
Regulatory Quality (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (low quality) to +2.5 (high quality)	-0.98	2006	-0.36	2006
Regime Durability (number of years since most recent regime change)	Polity IV data collection http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/inscr.htm	Polity variable DURABLE	8	2006	15	2006
Voice and Accountability (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (low accountability) to +2.5 (high accountability)	-1.27	2006	-0.48	2006
Rule of Law (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (weak rule of law) to +2.5 (strong rule of law)	-1.06	2006	-0.61	2006

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Institutional Performance – Human Rights						
State use of Political Terror (Political Terror Scale)	Gibney, M. http://www.politicalterror scale.org/	The database codes annual country-by-country human rights reports produced by the US Department of State and Amnesty International using a five-level scale. The US State Department values are presented here. 1=country under secure rule of law 2=limited imprisonment for political activities 3=Extensive political imprisonment 4=Level 3 activities apply to larger numbers 5=Level 4 activities apply to whole population	3	2006	2	2006

A Sample of Quantitative Indicators for Assessing Context: Tajikistan

Indicator	Reference Information	Description of Scale or Other Notes	Tajikistan	Year	Moldova	Year
Overall Instability Measures						
State Fragility	USAID “Measuring Fragility: Indicators and Methods for Rating State Performance” (USAID, 2005)	The fragility scores are standardized such that scores below 0 are considered ‘low fragility’, a desirable and positive outcome for states. The rest of the scale follows as: 0 - 0.375 – some fragility 0.375 – 0.75 – moderate fragility 0.75 – 1.125 – high fragility 1.125 or higher – highest fragility	0.64	2007	0.23	2007
Political Stability (Worldwide Governance Indicators)	http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi2007/home.htm	Ranges from -2.5 (low stability) to +2.5 (high stability) The instability risk score is the ratio of the country’s estimated probability of instability for the 3-year period 2005-2007 to the average risk for all OECD countries. For reference, scores above the global median (about 3.1) are considered moderate risk. Scores in the highest 25 th percentile globally (about 7) are considered high risk.	-1.30	2006	-0.69	2006
Instability Risk	CIDCM – Peace and Conflict Instability Ledger http://www.cidcm.umd.edu		7.3	2007	4.3	2007